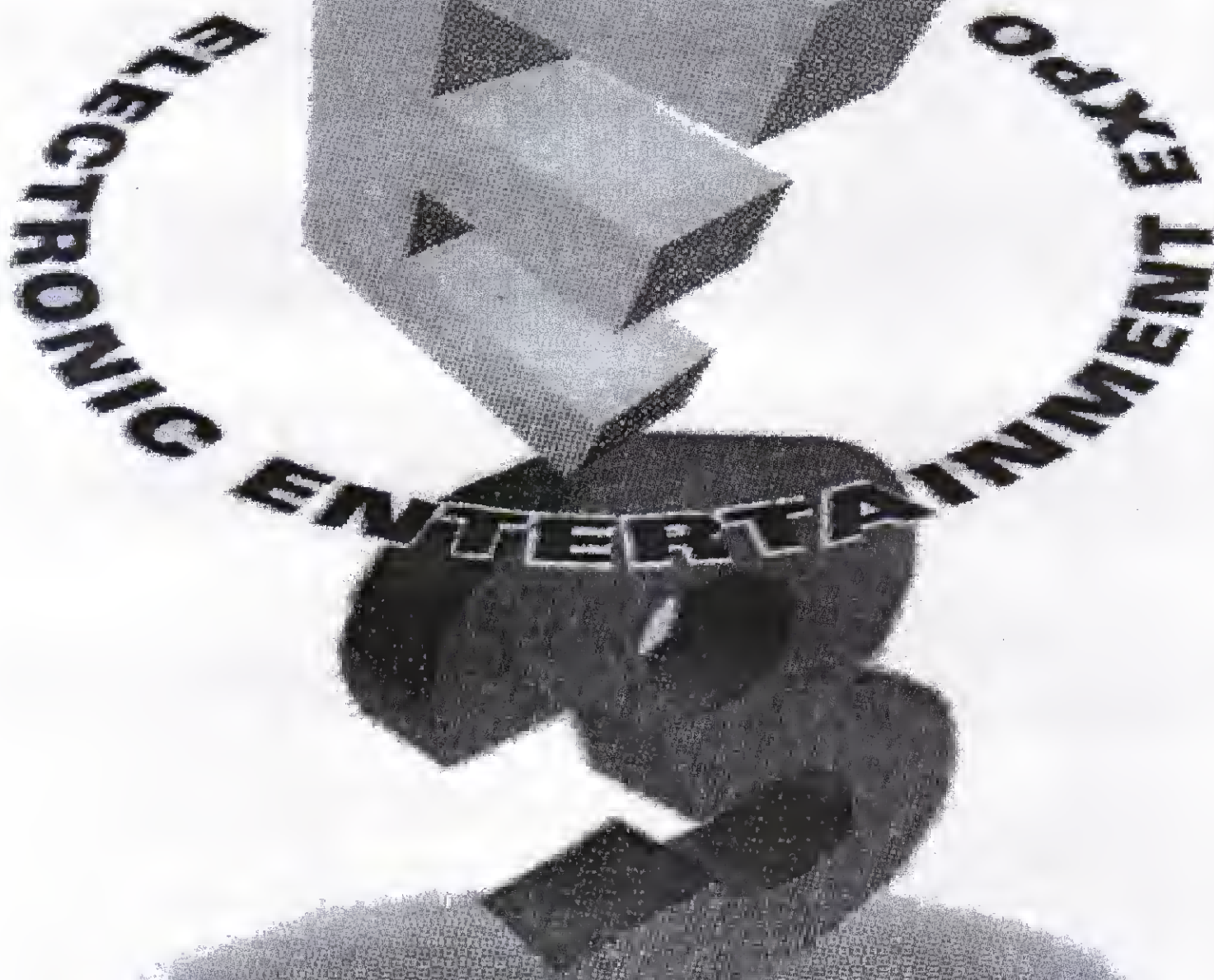
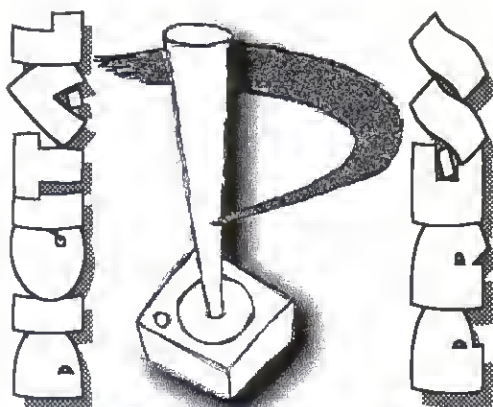


DIGITAL PREVIEW

THE Bio-degradable Source for Videogamers



#38: show.



DIGITAL PRESS #38 JULY/AUGUST 1998

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show.

EDITOR'S BLURB by Joe Santulli

You know that "glow" that eight-month pregnant women have? They're so full of life, and their bellies are really big. Well, now you can sort of picture ME these days. The "glow" comes more from the bliss of having so many fantastic games to play, and lots more to look forward to after the big show in Atlanta. The belly part is due to the beer, though. I really should do something about that. But maybe not.

We're all back from our trip and damn were we WELL REPRESENTED. Everywhere you turned there was a guy with a DIGITAL PRESS media badge! Yep, a dozen "contributing editors" turned out, and some of them even contributed to this issue. The others, well, I'll probably never hear from them again. But we all had a great time, as you'll soon find out.

This issue really comes on the heels of the rather gigantic issue #37, and I'm hoping it will hold you over for the rest of the summer while we bear down on updating the Collector's Guide. Can you believe we're on the FIFTH edition already? Where does the time go? Anyway, you won't be seeing a regular issue of Digital Press until late September or early October as a result. Don't worry, your subscriptions are based on the issue number, and of course we're coming back with #39 at that time.

While I'm on the topic, here's a little something YOU can work on this summer. If you own any of the past editions, you may recall a LORE section, in which gamers wrote about their favorite game memories, great garage sale finds, or other anecdotes related to video gaming. Well, the LORE section is being re-vamped with new stories for this edition. OK, here's the contest part...

Send us your favorite anecdote related to gaming (it can be the time you smacked your brother upside the head with a controller or that great haul you stumbled into) postmarked (or Emailed, preferably) no later than July 4th, 1998, and if we use your story you'll automatically receive a free LIMITED EDITION version of the DP Collector's Guide 5.0 which will contain your story PLUS some nifty extras that won't be published in the standard volume!

The Guide is set to release in September. Don't miss this chance for a freebie and your name in lights (well, light paper, anyway).

And now, here are the chronicles of fifteen lads and one lass and their adventures in the world of electronic entertainment's most anticipated event.

If you need me, I'll be in the basement playing games. See ya later!

On The Cover

The Show

Despite its rather "toppled" and insecure look, E3 was totally solid. It was nearly impossible to get into every nook and cranny of the shows 5 acres, and incredible to check out every game of the thousands on display.

It was video gaming nirvana.

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SURVIVAL AT E3

by Joe Santulli

FANTASTIC VOYAGE



I'm finally recovered from this year's E3 show! Here's what went down.

First, let me start this off by saying that this trip was nothing like the last one I reported to DP readers (Summer CES '93). That show centered around touring the Chicago area. This trip was mostly about drinking beer and playing video games. Mostly drinking beer. Despite that, I didn't miss one minute of the show, although most of it was seen through blurry eyes and heard through a dull throb.

LOST LUGGAGE

The plan was to hook up with Keita Iida, John Hardie (fellow DP staffers) and author Leonard Herman (*Phoenix: The Rise and Fall of Videogames*) at Newark airport. Well, the plane started boarding and they were nowhere to be found. "Four seats all to myself", I was thinking when they suddenly appeared, dashing towards the gate in a style reminiscent of O. J. Simpson before the days when the cops were running right behind him. We arrived in Atlanta to find that MY luggage had made it just fine, but theirs didn't get on the plane (O.J. would have thought of that!). Fortunately, everything turned up on the next plane from Newark. Although this "bad start" could have set the tone for the whole trip, it turned out to be the only real snag we had.

MINIATURE GOLF

After settling down in the luxurious Budgetel Inn (\$49.95 a night), the four of us met up with a few more avid gamers: Mike Etler, JoAnn Sciarappa, Scott Crawford, Ross Hamilton, Frank Nora, Don Rogers, and Walton "Kallah" Gibson. We had arrived early the day before the show and it seemed obvious to this group that some miniature golf/arcade action would be a good way to unwind. In a frantic serpentine pattern through downtown Atlanta's finest neighborhoods, we lost Don and Kallah to a left turn from the right lane. You gotta be quick to play with these guys. Unless it's electronically played, miniature golf is not my game. I gave up on it years ago when the courses stopped featuring windmills, loop the loops, and angry totem poles. It began drizzling around the tenth hole and by the fifteenth, rain was coming down in buckets. Charlton Heston couldn't have scripted the finale any better. I was getting my ass kicked and needed divine intervention.

Credit Keita, though. He's a heck of a miniature golfer.

MIDNIGHT MAGIC

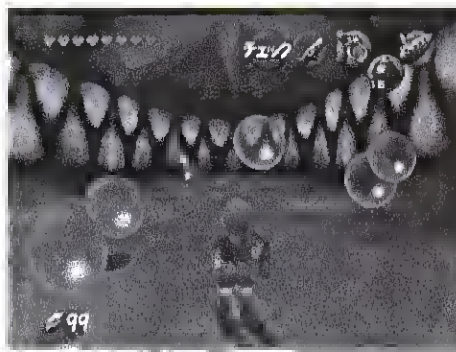
I haven't been to a college dorm since, well, I was in college, but the scene at the Budgetel Inn that first night brought back some memories. Picture this: several "open" rooms with smoke pouring from the doorways, people hanging around with drinks in their hands, a television set playing video games... We met up with a few late-comers: Tom Keller, Mike St. Clair, Rob Stickles, Dave Stein, and Jeff Eyster. We even had a guest celebrity. John found Dan Kramer, the inventor of the Atari 5200 trak-ball, over the Internet just days earlier and arranged to meet with him that night. Dan hung out with us that night, he certainly has recollections of his days at Atari. He had most of our ears for most of the night. In between stories I'd catch a quick game of **Gran Turismo** or **Cool-boarders 2** with anyone looking for some stiff competition. Just about everyone brought some games and a console so there was no shortage of electronic fun in those rooms! The night finally wrapped up just a few hours before the E3 show began!



Don Kromer, father of the Atari Trak-Ball

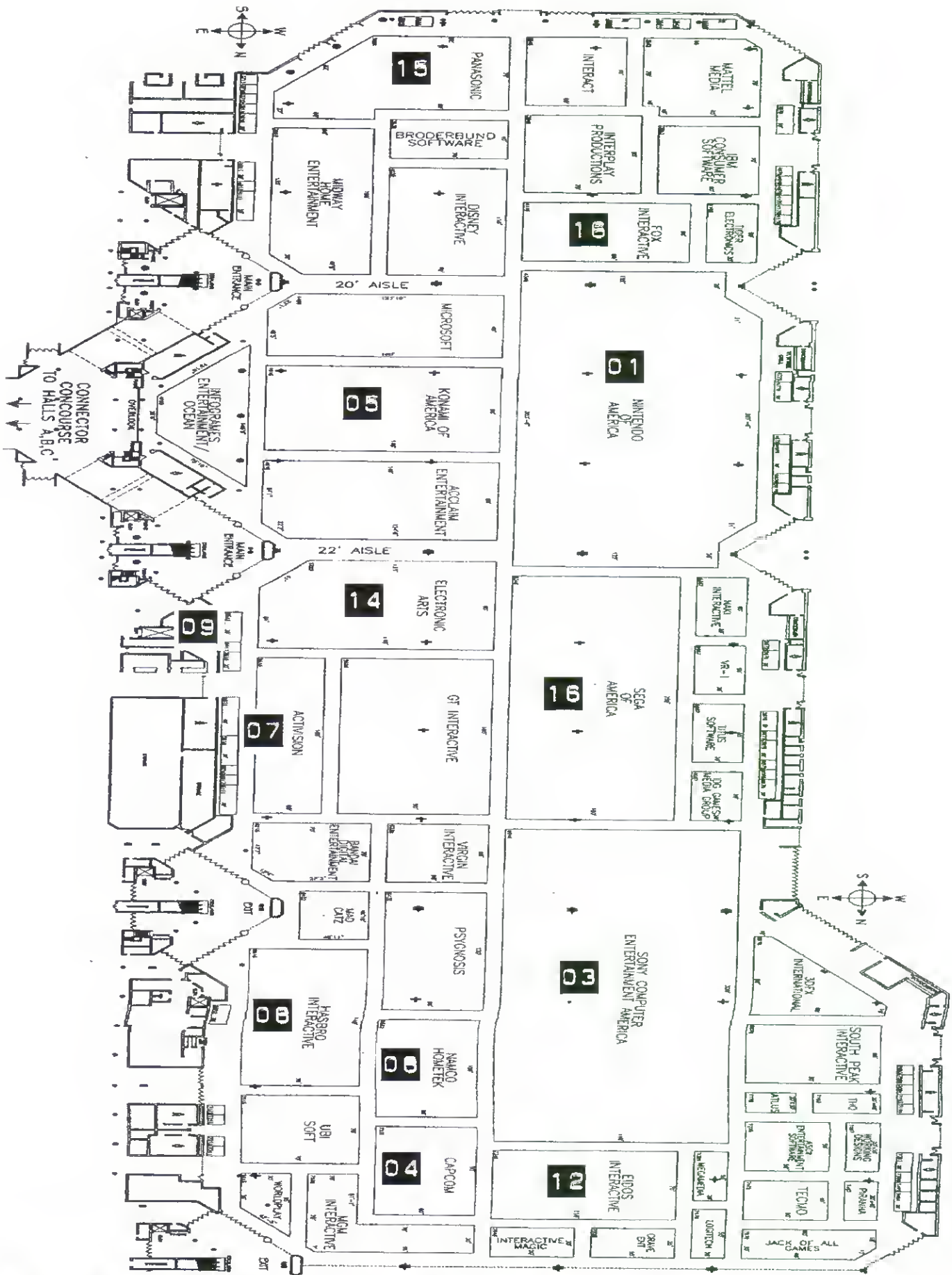
COMMANDO RAID

Finally the REAL game was afoot, as the doors to E3 opened to the media for a free breakfast. This would be the first of many free meals we would get, and probably the first perk I've ever had as a "media guy". Our crew each had different priorities while at the show, so we spent most of the time there running solo missions. MY job was to play as many games as possible, hook up with "pro" publication people (and hawk my wares), and fill an entire suitcase with useless promotional materials.



The Legend of Zelda for N64 was fun to play, but it didn't "knock my socks off". I wasn't wearing socks because I was too drunk to remember to put them on.

The show was HUGE. Somewhere I saw a claim of "5 acres of displays", and I wouldn't doubt it. I spent almost the entire first day in the Nintendo section **01** playing the N64 **Zelda**, **Banjo-Kazooie**, and **All-Star Baseball**. Just like when I'm at home, I completely lost track of time while playing and soon realized I'd have to pace myself a little better if I wanted to see everything in just three days.



I was initially impressed with both **Zelda** and **Banjo**, but now that I think back to them there really wasn't anything "innovative" going on there. I'm getting a little tired of watching a genre reach complete saturation. Why can't we just enjoy the experience of a game like **Mario 64** instead of banging out clone after clone. It tends to water down the original experience, doesn't it? I'm not saying that these new Nintendo games (which also include a Mario 64-ish game for their proprietary squirrel character **Conker**) aren't fun. They just aren't original. Nintendo isn't alone in this category, though. I saw just as many **Mario 64** clones in third-party booths.

SURROUND

The resident author in our crew (Len) managed to score a connection with the folks at Imagine Publishing (*Next Generation*, *PSM*, among others) for an invitee-only cocktail hour 02 after the show (but inside their display tent) both Thursday and Friday. It was a thrill being surrounded by the names and faces I've been seeing on magazine colophons over the years, guys like Chris Charla, *Next Generation's* editor-in-chief (go ahead, say it - I have no life). I even had the opportunity to meet the guy who won the *Next Generation* "hardcore gamer" contest, Chris Marx. I won't tell his story here, check out the May 1998 issue. Suffice to say he was hardcore enough to jump out of a moving vehicle at the age of 6 to play a video game (Ha! That's nothing! Try being dragged around while your pants-leg is caught in the car door, Mr. Hardcore!) Everyone I met at that party was really cool, and I found myself drifting into the same drunken stupor that I had shaken off mere moments earlier.

When the doors closed we were back at the hotel drinking again. Eventually I passed out.

HUNT & SCORE

A few of us were fortunate to get another invite to the Ziff-Davis breakfast the following morning (when I think back now, *Digital Press* must seem like a HUGE venture from the outside, there were SO many of us sporting DP media passes!). We hooked up with some of the *EGM* guys this time. I totally interrupted mostly everyone's breakfast to introduce myself and hand out issues of *Digital Press*. I got some strange looks, like "who let this clown in here, and why is he eyeing up my croissant?", but you gotta seize the moment, eh?

NAME THIS GAME

I did a better job of distributing my time across all of the manufacturers the last two days. I would have to say that very few games caught my eye.

I spent quite a bit of time at Sony's display 03. As weak as most movie-licensed games are, I liked Activision's idea of a **Fifth Element**



Coolboarders 3 is a major graphic improvement.

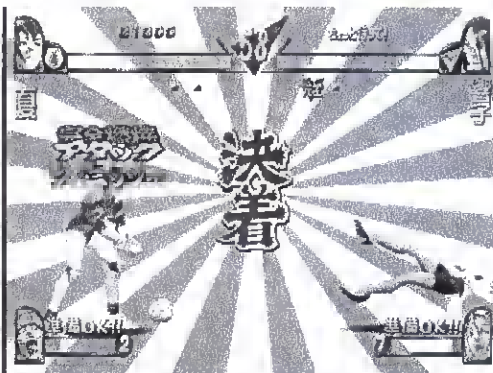
game. Great flick, but again, the game itself was nothing special - basically another **Tomb Raider** wannabe. This time you're Bruce Willis instead of Lara, or you can be the wonderfully underdressed Milla Jovovich who kicks and

punches instead. With some more action thrown in this could be a fun game.

Coolboarders 3 looked superb, easily the best of all the snowboarding games there, with **Big Air** (by Accolade) being the worst. It's funny, but when you ask a rep about a game's flaws you always get the "it's only 20% done" speech. Well, when I go back next year I'm going to regurgitate that speech for all of the games that get released with those flaws. Those of you who read *DP* regularly know I'm a big **Coolboarders 2** fan, and if you felt the same way, you should be really excited about the new game, there are more courses, more boarders, and the "seams" that plagued the last game are gone. Really!

Sony also had a **Spice Girls** game on display. You can turn your nose up at this one or you can look forward to an improvement on the **Parappa the Rapper** genre. Another game in this genre called **Bust A Groove** was less impressive.

I don't consider myself a die hard fight game fan, but I couldn't tear myself away from Capcom 04's Playstation rendition of the arcade game **Rival Schools**. It game plays a little like **Street**



Fighter EX but there are some wild "team

I really got into **Rival Schools'** off-the wall characters and over-the-top moves.

moves" where the player on the sideline gets to participate during a battle. The characters are really unique, too. Where else are you going to fight against a volleyball player who treats you like the ball? This one looks as good as the coin-op.

Big hype games included Konami 05's **Metal Gear Solid**, which looks like it will live up to it. The 3D environment and enemy AI are spectacular. Namco 06's **Pac-Man 3D** doesn't live up to the hype, however. It plays just like any of the other Mario 64 games but with less interesting elements especially when compared to Nintendo's offerings in the same genre. I also failed to see the excitement surrounding Activision 07's update of the classic **Asteroids**. I didn't ask on this one, but I hope **Asteroids** was one of the "20% done" games. Maybe with some more work it can live up to that hype...

One of the two games that weren't hyped enough was Hasbro

DS's Centipede, which was lots of fun. I played two different modes, an updated version of the classic featuring 3D rendered graphics and another "quest mode" that plays (again) like **Mario 64**. The difference between the 3D treatment of **Centipede** and that of **Pac-Man** is that you feel like you've been immersed in the **Centipede** environment in the former, whereas **Pac-Man's** world seems all new and unfamiliar.



I wasn't in agreement with other staffers on Activision's **Asteroids** update. It looks pretty but doesn't seem like much of a game.

The "other" under-hyped game was Activision's **Tenchu**. I thought this game would have gotten more floor space, it seems to be highly touted by the pro mags and I can see why. From what I could tell from my time playing, the goal of the game is to kill, silently. There was another game at the show called **Ninja**, but **Tenchu** better captured that stalking around suspicious-like action that most **Ninja's** I know do. You know, hiding in the shadows, leaping from rooftops, and generally lurking about looking for trouble. Yep, now this is a game made for ME.



Tenchu: Ah, the thrill of the 'ol "leap on him from the tree branches and stick a sword thru his heart" move.

XENOPHOBE

We were really treated well in Atlanta. On our last night, Jerry Jessop and a few other reps from Sony took Keita, John, Rob and I out for dinner and then (can you see this one coming?) out for drinks. We met up with Dan Kramer at the bar later (Dan used to work with Jerry at Atari), surprising us with gifts of original T-shirts designed for Atari for a Winter CES sometime in the mid 80's! My shirt says "Get your hands on an Atari Trak-Ball". Can you imagine the thrill of being handed a shirt designed by the creator of the Atari trak-ball promoting the Atari trak-ball? No, I didn't think so. Well, I feel pretty privileged to own one. It feels like owning a piece of Atari history.

We weren't the only ones winding down from the show, we soon discovered. Two columnists for Japanese magazines (one for the Saturn and one for Playstation) introduced themselves to Keita. They didn't speak a word of English but I think I fooled them into thinking I knew what they were talking about. Somewhere in the conversation I heard "Star Fighter". Yeah, I love Star Fighter, I told them. Anyway, our picture may appear

in one of these foreign mags, they seemed very intent on getting a group shot. I imagine under the picture there will be the caption "*Drunken Americans say they enjoy Star Fighter. What lame-o's.*"

I also got to meet the gang at *Game Informer* at the bar. These guys were thrilled to talk about the classics. Somehow I knew they had it in them!

Like the readers and collectors I've met over the years, I'm always impressed by fans of the video gaming community, whether they be writers, players, "players", or a combination thereof. It's pretty hard to explain to people at my real job that I'm going on vacation with sixteen guys to play video games, but to those sixteen guys and the hundreds waiting for us at the show, it's the most explainable vacation there is.

VIDEO LIFE

Although I suspected earlier in the trip, fellow staffer John Hardie and I seem to have been separated at birth. You can find a brother who likes certain types of games, women, and even music at just about every corner... but... olives stuffed with jalapenos? Chris DeBurgh? Laughing Skull beer? Even O.J. Simpson and the "real murderer" had more differences in their DNA patterns. Scary...

I couldn't have asked for a better time. You never know what's going to happen when you venture out with a group of people that are practically strangers. Hell, I had never met my roommate Leonard Herman. As I mentioned though, it takes a certain kind of person to get into this hobby. It's a bond we all share... Leonard even referred to me as "the perfect wife" although I refused sex on several occasions. Consider yourself, having read this far, part of the family.



Back row: Rob Stickles, Leonard Herman, John Hardie, Joe Santulli. Front Row: Keita Iida, Jerry Jessop.

E3 MEMORABLE MOMENTS



JOHN HARDIE'S STORY:

Well here we are, all recovered from the gala event known as E-3. Only took me two weeks to get back on my feet and I'm still not 100% caught up on mail, pending deals, etc.

The show was fast and furious and took it's toll on our bodies, and the nightly parties of gaming, booze and women didn't help either. I'm assuming there were women present because I was too busy gaming and boozing to get a count of them all but knowing the studs we are, I'm sure the babes were plentiful. Anyway, without further delay I present to you my 10 most memorable moments from the 1998 E-3 Convention...

10) The Sailor Moon girl. **09** This little cutie had the shortest skirt I've ever seen. I just had to stop and take a shot at the basketball game at their booth. On the second try she comes up behind you and puts a blindfold on you. I thought I was pretty smooth with this one until Keita took one of the free pens out of his bag and threw it next to her foot from 5 feet away just so he could get a peek.

9) Not spending more than 2.5 minutes (150 seconds) total time in the Nintendo booth. **01**

In keeping with my annual tradition of Nintendo aversion, I managed to beat last years record of 2.7 minutes; stopping only to grab a few hats and other freebies. I might despise them but I'll take their stuff!

8) Discovering that Joe Santulli and I are actually brothers separated at birth. Amazingly we have the same or similar tastes in all of the important things in life; beer, women, music, etc.

After I shattered his illusions of grandeur in the area of 80's music trivia, he, Keita, and I launched into an intensive trivia contest to determine the master of 80's music knowledge. The contest is still underway...

7) Meeting Barbara Castillo of Sony. Barbara is an ex-Atari person who was there from the early eighties right up until the end (She was the 2nd to last person to leave). I really enjoyed

talking with her about Atari and learning more about what she did, how she got her start, what went on under the golden fuji, etc.

6) "Montezuma's Return" from Utopia Technologies. **10** Although I didn't get to meet the guys at Utopia (their game was being shown at the 3Dfx booth), I was very impressed with the self-running demo they had going. The game seems to have retained the simplicity of the original while venturing forward into the 3D realm. Putting my bias aside (I'm a sucker for any classic update) I honestly think this one will be a hit.

5) "Asteroids" from Activision. Unlike their remake of Battlezone, which seemed a little too complex for me, Activision **07** could have a big seller with **Asteroids**. This one has added elements like a black hole that sucks you in if you ease up on the thrust too much, 3 different views, and several new enemies. Since I love updates (see #6) I'm eagerly drooling for this one.



John celebrates in the time-honored tradition of E3: getting blindfolded by a Japanese schoolgirl with super powers.

4) Meeting Dan Kramer, designer of the Atari 5200 trakball. Wow! Talk about a party animal! Dan is THE man when it comes to having a good time. He talked for hours and we sat like children listening to the master weave his tales of the good ol' days. Dan is loaded with info and stories and is a hell of a nice guy to boot.

3) Getting turned away 7 times from the VM Labs booth. **11** Shit! What the hell did a person have to do to get a

glimpse of this thing? Here's the story for this one. First off, I have a press badge. Secondly, I know 3 or 4 guys who work at VM Labs (former Atari dudes). Later on, I tagged along with 2 bigwigs from Sony that had an appointment to see the system. And I still couldn't get in! These guys will regret shunning the little guy one day. After all, it was the fanatics and enthusiasts that kept Atari going all those years. Mark my words, they will rue the day they turned down John Hardie!!! Fools! Bow down before your demi-god!!!!!!

2) The Eidos girls. **12** Forget Lara Croft. These three delicious delicacies with no bras and tight, tight, tight tops were on-hand to show their wares, and the latest wears of the company to the masses. And no I didn't misspell wears in the previous sentence. These girls were handing out t-shirts to the hormone-fueled crowd. I didn't really want a shirt but since I was in the

area, I figured what the hell. The girls were tossing the shirts out randomly. I made a desperate leap and snagged one in the air. On the way down from this Jordan-esque display of physical prowess, this little oriental guy in front of me snatches the shirt out of my hand (No, it wasn't Keita). I growled and grunted a few times at him and threatened to shatter his jaw and he promptly handed over the shirt. I made my way closer to the lovelies and can patriotically report that all three were standing hard at attention. And it wasn't even cold in there...

1) **"Centipede" from Hasbro Interactive.** **06** After being dazzled by a video promo that touted the new Atari Platinum series and going into strobe-effect shock at the rapid fire images of the various 2600/7800 boxes being displayed, I had a chance to play this wondrous game. In case I didn't mention it, I love updates of classic games. This update could be the best I've seen yet. Start buying your Hasbro stock NOW!!! Along with the gratuitous classic mode which plays with a 3/4 perspective, **Centipede** has a first-person adventure mode that kicks ass! Choose between classic and adventure modes, toggle 3 different camera angles, and toss in a host of new bad bugs. I'm so sure that this game will be a blockbuster hit that I'm willing to release 2 of the 3 Eidos ladies if it isn't. The bugs are back!!!



Keita Iida's Story

DP's 10 Best E3 Moments:

9) **Getting most of our meals for free.** Gotta love them media credentials!

8) **Loading up on booze at the Imagine (Next Generation) cocktail party** **02** and chugging down the free Heinekens at the Sony cocktail bar for lunch.

7) **Finally playing a game involving school-girls (Rival Schools) which was as fun to play as it is to watch.** **04**

4) **Metal Gear Solid...** **05**

5) **The Nintendo booth being half decent.** **01** You should've seen last year's pathetic roundup of sorry titles. At least this year they had Zelda which will be THE hit of this winter holiday season.

4) **FREE STUFF!** Everything from company press kits to **Centipede** pins to Demo CDs. E3-exclusive Playstation Underground Special Edition discs anyone? :)



Keita does a role-reversal on the MGM representative by showing him how the game is SUPPOSED to be played.

3) **Centipede, Asteroids and Montezuma's Return showing great promise.** Given that the mediocre **Frogger** has already sold over a million copies, the aforementioned three titles are sure-fire hits that should at least match the sales figures of **Frogger**.

2) **The (almost) all-night game fests back at the hotel,** where I was able to assert my gaming dominance in front of all the astonished (and defeated) onlookers.

1) **Babes galore!** Ok, so John and Joe were trying to hog them, but man, were they a sight for sore eyes... especially the Sailor Moon honey and the three women in the Eidos booth.. booya!

Leonard Herman's Story

MEMORIAL EVENTS AT E3 (in no particular order)

1) Playing Miniature Golf in the rain.

2) 2nd Row Seats For A Press Conference Featuring Howard Lincoln of Nintendo.

3) Meeting the guys from Imagine Publishing **02** (and their cocktail party).

4) Meeting the guys from Ziff-Davis **13** (and their breakfast).

5) Meeting the guys from *Game Informer* (and their barroom behaviour!).

6) Meeting Steve Kent, Dan Amrich and the folks from *Games Magazine*.

7) Talking with Dan Kramer - the father of the Atari 5200 Trak-Ball (and getting a shirt from him!).

8) Jerry Jessop's quote concerning why Gary Tramiel was at E3: "He's looking at all the stuff that he helped destroy" (This was a reference to the fact that Hasbro was redoing **Centipede** and Activision was redoing **Asteroids**)

9) Dinner with Jerry, Susan, and Ann of Sony.

10) Meeting the Japanese editors and getting our pictures taken.

11) Being able to visit my aunt and uncle outside of Atlanta.

12) Fighting for stuff at Eidos **12**

13) The **Centipede** box.

14) **Monopoly** coming out for the game.com and as a handheld.

15) Looking up in the lobby of the Marriott Marquis.

16) Hearing about Frank's 3 am discovery.

17) 29 cent McDonalds hamburgers.

18) Rooming with Joe Santulli .

19) *The Jenny Jones Show*.

20) Four days and nights away from the real world with lots of fun people!

LEAST FAVORITE EVENT OF E3

* Unpacking all of the useless shit that I took from the expo!

Don Rogers' Story

Let's see, top ten things at E3 (This is the tongue-in-cheek version):

10. Being pelted with *Pocket Monsters* at the Nintendo booth. **01**
9. Busting Sega **16**'s chops about prematurely dropping Saturn support.
8. The free meals in the Media Lounge.
7. Access to the press kit room.
6. The **Centipede** buttons
5. The Imagine Media cocktail parties.
4. The bonus t-shirts in the Heat.Net boxes.
3. The Sailor Moon girl in the cage.
2. The "Space Bunnies Must Die" girl.
1. Not having my bag of t-shirts explode in the Sony booth like last year.

Rob Stickles' Story

Electronic Entertainment Expo 1998 (E3) in Atlanta. Three days of trade show craziness, little or no sleep, and pure gaming fun. Being somewhat of an E3 virgin I don't think I was really prepared for the sheer size of the show, truly an eye opening experience for this humble Canuck boy.

Let me start with the things that I felt weren't so hot about the show:

1) **Ultima Ascension** (Origin/Electronic Arts, PC) - **14**
Formerly known as **Ultima IX**. What was supposed to be the concluding chapter of the **Ultima** series has turned into The Action Adventures of the Avatar as he tries to imitate Lara Croft. What I find so irritating about this game is that it's just a rehash of concepts that have been done to death with varying degrees of success over the past two years. The **Ultima** games of the past pushed the bounds of what we thought RPG's were all about every time a new game arrived; even **Ultima Under-**

world was doing the first-person corridor crawl long before **Doom** was even heard of. The world of Britannia in **Ascension** is supposed to be quite large, spanning several continents and a few million square miles which the player must traverse using his own shoe leather. If this is your idea of fun then you should go ahead and start walking to Brazil, I'll catch up to you later.

Ultima Ascension ultimately disappoints because we've seen it all before; both **Drakkhein** and **Lords of Midnight** already have accomplished what this game promises almost a decade ago on far less computer power. Admittedly, my opinion of this game might have been soured by the rather choppy and buggy demo I was allowed to play (crashed the thing twice just looking around with the mouse, and I was held captive by EA floor staff while they rebooted). A game this early in development should have been a hands-off demo. Here's hoping that this was a bad dream and that a real game worthy of concluding the **Ultima** series comes from Origin.

2) **Color Gameboy** (Nintendo) - **01** This little guy should be renamed the Color Bubble Boy, since he didn't come out of his protective glass dome. We weren't allowed to sully him with our grubby paws, lest we transmit some communicable gaming disease to this aging platform.

3) **Space Bunnies Must Die** (Ripcord/Panasonic, PC) - **15**
Did I miss something? I saw a lot of nice-looking models (In pink no less!) promoting this, yet I was unable to find a computer on the show floor that would give me an idea of what the game was like. They sure hooked me with the babes, but I wanted more!

4) **Sonic PC** (Segasoft) - **16** Saturn owners should get first crack at a **Sonic** game by default, since they've been given the shaft this year. Why Sega wants to make PC owners happy with this is beyond me. PC **Sonic** looked hideous and choppy, and if I'm not mistaken this was the only 320x200 game in 1998. Sacrilege.

There, it felt good to get all that negative stuff out. Now we can concentrate on the really cool and fun things:

10) **Panzer Dragoon Saga** (Sega, Saturn) - **16** Top of the meagre heap of offerings that SOA has in store for Saturn owners this year. It's a shame that more games like this didn't show up earlier, they would have given the Saturn a decent chance in the US. Get this gem before it's gone and enjoy it while it lasts.

9) **Unreal** (Epic/Digital Extremes, PC) - **17** I was captivated just looking at the sky and watching empty shells bounce with real physics. I think I played the game at some point too. Beautiful.

8) **Gillian Anderson is far shorter in person than I thought she was.** I think Fox Interactive **16** had an X-Files game to show but I'm not sure, all I saw was some FMV clips and some more Gillian. :-)

7) **Cool Boarders 3** (UEP Systems, Playstation) - **03** Everything you could want in a boarding game that **N64 1080** didn't deliver. Joystick moves for grabs and stunts that are logical and have some basis in reality, more than one manufacturer's board represented, and some neat four-letter words. There was a noticeable lack of bovine quadrupeds to harass though,

maybe this will be rectified in the final product. UEP definitely took my suggestions to heart.

6) **Douglas Adams is far taller in person than I thought he was**, even when he's sitting on a stool. Doug, thanks a lot for chatting with me for so long and the free copy of your game. Hope the lifestyle comes together.

5) **Centipede (Hasbro, PC) - [08]** This should be the benchmark for all future classic game updates. Classy in a way that compliments the originals gameplay and design. Groovy box art too.

4) **Rival Schools: United by Fate (Capcom, Playstation) - [04]** I tend to ignore Capcom 2D-ish fighters as of late, mostly because I don't see what all the big fuss is about. **Rival Schools** is more of the same but it has some intangible quality that compels me to want to play this for hours. I can't put my finger on it but I guess it's the slap-happy fun with young girls

(in school uniforms, natch) gratuitously beating each other senseless that makes this game so infinitely fascinating. Good, wholesome family entertainment, and it supports the Dual Shock feedback pad too!

3) **Poy Poy 'till the wee hours of the morning**, 'Nuff said.

2) **Metal Gear Solid (Konami, Playstation) - [05]** What more can I say? Simply breathtaking in execution, subtlety and style. Easily the game of the show. We waited a lot time for this, and Konami has delivered in spades.

1) **Meeting the whole gang**. Some of you guys I've known for years but never actually met face to face, others I met for the first time and had a great time with: Keita, John, Joe, Tom, Len, Don, Dave, Kramer, Jerry, Mike, Scott, JoAnn, Ross, Mick, Colby and anyone else I forgot (send me nasty email if I did). It was a blast guys, here's to LA in '99!

E3 Goes Retro

by Keita Iida

I was very excited about going to this year's E3 because of the numerous classic remakes that were promised to be shown. Fueled by the success of classic game remakes such as **Tempest 2000**, **Frogger** and **Robotron 64**, a number of software publishers are scrambling to jump on the "retro" (god, we hate that name; let's stick with "classic") bandwagon. Among them are Activision, Hasbro, Take Two Interactive and Namco. They've also realized that classic updates provide a way to stand apart from the me-too shooters, fighters, racers and sports games that have saturated the video game market. Unfortunately, Jeff Minter's **Tempest 3000** was shown behind closed doors, and **Choplifter 3-D** was nowhere to be found. Nevertheless, three out of the four games I DID see were very nicely done.

ASTEROIDS

Activision for the PC and Playstation
Available Fall 1998

While **Pitfall 3-D** received a lukewarm reception as a result of its generic three dimensional platform action, Activision appears to be on the right track with **Asteroids**, a promising update to Atari's coin-op classic.

As in the vector game original, players defend a lone ship against rotating space rocks and the game still has the classic fire-shield-thrust style of gameplay (although shields were not introduced until **Asteroids Deluxe**). Unlike the original, all of the foreground objects are done in 3D polygons. **Asteroids** also has gorgeous two-dimensional scenery of nebulae, space stations and other

objects.

You're allowed to choose from one of three very large and fast ships. And this time around, there are many more foes besides the original's two UFOs. One cool feature is your ability to hunt and "lock on" to destroy competitor company's asteroid clearance ships. An entire new arsenal of futuristic weapons such as smart bombs have also been added.

Unless Activision really screws up at the last minute, I don't see this one being a dud. Thumbs up.

CENTIPEDE

Hasbro Interactive for PC and Playstation
Available 4th Quarter 1998

Following its success in late 1997 with the revamped **Frogger** (which has sold more than one million units to date, world-wide) Hasbro Interactive follows it up with a spectacular remake of **Centipede**. The original coin-op version of the game was created by Ed Logg (who also is credited with other hits like **Asteroids**, **Millipede**, **Gauntlet**, **Space Lords**, **Xybots** and **Steel Talons**). And although he doesn't have a hand in the new version, the elements that made **Centipede** so popular in the first place have thankfully remained intact.

In the all-new version, centipedes once again rise from the ground to attack the peaceful and earthy race known as the Wee People (I'm not making this up! That's what Hasbro's press release says.) You play the role of Wally (I'm assuming he's a Wee person), who's armed with the "Shooter" (didn't know it was called that) to fight off the

centipedes and other bugs. I've been told that there will be over seven different worlds and that the final challenge will involve defeating the Queen Centipede.

Among the classic updates shown at E3, **Centipede** was the best of the bunch. Although there's an interesting version with a 3/4 isometric viewpoint that plays like the original, the selling point of this game will definitely be the awesome first person, 3-D version. You know how even the most harmless bugs can look scary under a magnifying glass? Well, this game will give you the chills when you watch the EVIL looking Centipede slithering toward you! The 3-D version also allows you to roam around freely anywhere on the playfield, and it plays wonderfully.

MONTEZUMA'S RETURN

Take Two Interactive (Developed by Utopia Technologies) for PC and Playstation
Available Fall 1998

For those of you who aren't familiar with **Montezuma's Revenge**, it was (and still is) a killer game that rivaled **Pitfall** in popularity but actually was a much better game in my opinion. It combined the best elements of adventure games with jumping-climbing-fighting dexterity challenges along with a dose of puzzle solving elements, all wrapped up and spiced with colorful graphics. Originally created for the Atari 8-bit line of computers by Utopia Technologies, it was later ported to the a wide range of systems including the 2600, 5200 (which was identical to its 400/800 counterpart), ColecoVision, and even the Sega Master System.

The same team of individuals responsible for the original are working on a sequel called **Montezuma's Return**, which is a first-person real-time 3D action adventure game for the PC. As was the case with **Pitfall 3D**, **Montezuma's Return** moves far away from its 2D roots and into a full three-dimensional world.

Unlike the original (which will thankfully be included as a bonus in **Montezuma's Return**), the remake will not feature Panama Joe as its main character. Rather, you'll be taking on the role of Max Montezuma, the descendant of the legendary Aztec emperor, running around in an open environment solving puzzles, maneuvering obstacles and avoiding foes by running, jumping from trampolines and punching. There will be nine levels and nine bonus levels in the finished version of the game.

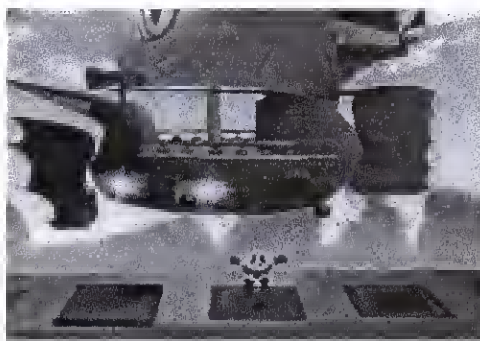
Compared to the original, **Montezuma's Return** seems to lean more heavily toward exploration and puzzle solving instead of the strong emphasis on action and jumping found in **Montezuma's Revenge**. In other words, if you see it as a cross between **Tomb Raider**, **Super Mario 64** and **Prince of Persia**, you wouldn't be far off. Furthermore, the puzzles seemed quite easy and enemies were little more than mere obstacles that are easily disposed of, suggesting that **Montezuma's Return** is focused more on the casual player and not the hardcore gamer that grew up adoring the groundbreaking Atari 8-bit classic.

The game is set for a fall release for the PC, followed shortly by a version for the Gameboy (!). I'm told that Playstation and Nintendo 64 ports are also under consideration, although no timetables have been set for either of them.

PAC-MAN 3D

by Namco for Playstation
Available 4th Quarter 1998

What an enormous disappointment this one was. After hearing that **Pac-Man Ghost Zone** was canned after its poor showing at last year's E3 and that Namco was totally



Here's a switch: Pac-Man is smiling at the video game player, who is not having a very good time in his natural habitat.

revamping the game engine, I was optimistic. Sadly, **Pac-Man 3D** isn't any better, and is unquestionably the worst of the four updated classics that were shown at this year's E3.

This new version of **Pac-Man** tries to add variety by offering different levels

of varying gameplay in a pseudo three-dimensional environment. The levels vary from standard side-scrolling, in which familiar fruits are collected, to an isometric viewpoint in the classic maze level. In the maze level, **Pac-Man** has the ability to jump over ghosts if need be, a feature that is reminiscent of **Pac-Mania**.

The other levels can best be described as a 3D version of **Pac-Land**. The smashing "butt-jump" found in this game will be familiar to those who played **Super Mario 64**, and is an integral part of the game for defeating enemies and breaking objects. He can also do a normal jump and even swim. Namco opted to retain a certain retro look to the game by using textures only sparingly, with **Pac-Man** looking very similar to how he looked in **Pac-Land** (i.e.- the **Pac-Man** cartoon.)

Although I only spent about twenty minutes playing the game, it was enough to convince me that **Pac-Man 3D** needs yet another major revamping. The forced camera angles are confusing, and some of the levels (particularly the ship level) were very tedious and boring. The **Pac-Mania**-is level was the most enjoyable, but even that sub-game was also filled with shortcomings. The view of the entire playfield was even more restricted than **Pac-Mania**, meaning that decisions of where to go often became a matter of guesswork as opposed to careful thinking.

Here's hoping that Namco's historic character gets to be in a game deserving of his namesake. We're just afraid that it'll be in a game other than **Pac-Man 3D**.

The best thing at Sega's display was this tiny little spy radio. I secretly listened, yet acted interested as a Sega rep bored me to tears about their PC line.



CENTIPED

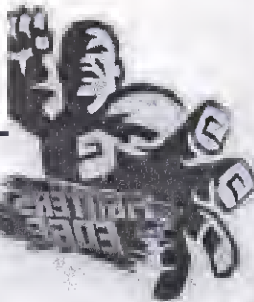
Button for Hasbro's much anticipated Centipede.



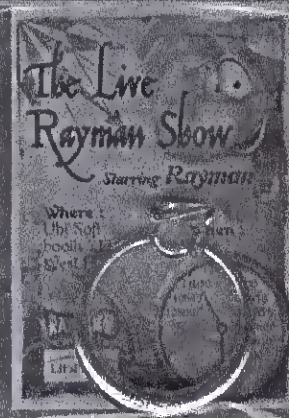
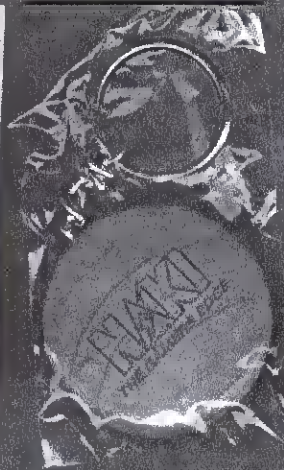
Pin for Electronic Arts' multi-player Sim City 3000.

FM'ERZ

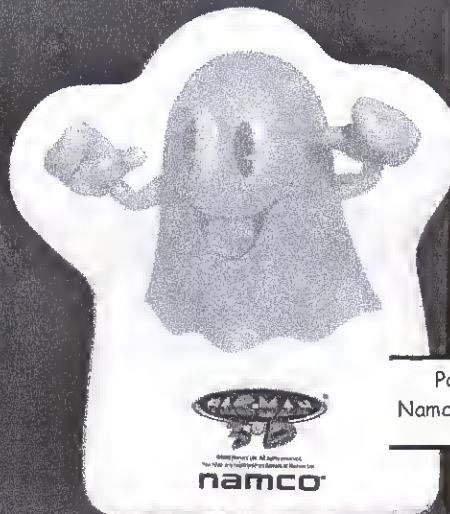
This "Fighter's Edge" tattoo is great fun on an unsuspecting, sleeping wife. Watch her show her "fighter's edge" when she wakes up and sees her new body art!



A real wooden Naki keychain! Perfect kindling for starting a cozy fire.



An earring (I think that's a first for me) you got after viewing the Ray Man demo. NOTE: this serves as a nipple ring as well. I know because I tried it.



Post-it pad for Namco's Pac-Man 3D.



I'm not sure *where* this button came from, but it has the word "Cajones" in it. Hee hee.



A Lara Croft Tomb Raider 3 yo-yo. To make small talk I asked a rep if Lara would be wielding a yo-yo in the game. I was asked to leave at that point.

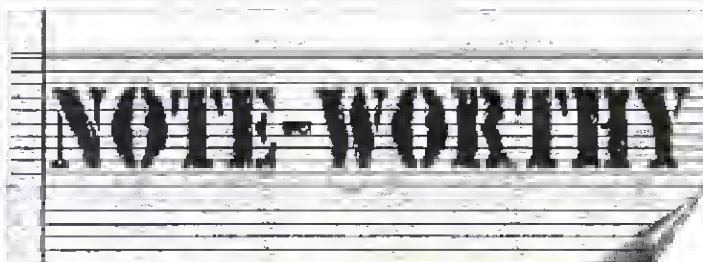


Nintendo Banjo-Kazooie pin. It took me two days to realize that "Kazooie" is a character, not part of Banjo's name...



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one more soldier added to the classic-gaming army

The surgeon-general has announced that excessive videogame playing while pregnant can addict the baby to videogames.

With that Jeff and Rebecca Cooper announce the birth of their second son! Congratulations, Mr. and Mrs' "Coop"!

Name: Nathan Samuel Cooper

Birthdate/Time: June 5, 1998, 10:30 a.m.

Weight: 7.5 ounces

Length: 21 inches

Baby's First Words: "QIX."

secret character found in mortal kombat 4!

This rather buff-looking character was seen executing a few "moves" on the ladies of **Mortal Kombat 4**, presumably as a motion-capture effort that surely must be embedded somewhere in the game! His special "fatality" involves rodeo clowns, but that's all we know at the moment. We'll keep you posted...



Digital Press is dedicated to the memory of my best friend, Kevin Oleniacz. Kevin's spirit will be with us through every homing missile fired, knockout punch delivered, UFO destroyed, and finish line crossed.

Play recklessly. Think positively. Live EVERY moment to the fullest